

REGION 5 – ONEIDA LAKE BASIN

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March had an average temperature of 34.2°F, 0.6° above normal, and 2.89" precipitation, 0.13" below normal. The first 14 days of the month averaged 6° below normal and migration got off to a slow start. The next 15 days, 15-29 March, averaged 10° above normal. Oneida Lake was mostly ice-free by 23 March and most other lakes and ponds at lower elevations had opened up by the end of the month. April's average temperature of 43.8° was 1.5° below normal, and the 2.61" of precipitation was 0.78" below normal. The period from 30 March through 13 April averaged 8.23° below normal, slowing the pace of migration. Despite the cold start to the month, Adirondack lakes were mostly ice-free by 12 April. May was cool and wet, with an average temperature of 56.0°, 1.1° below normal. The 5.27" of precipitation was 1.88" above normal. Heavy rain on several weekend days certainly contributed to the low numbers of some neotropical migrant species reported. There were 14.3" of snow for the season.

The late winter Red-necked Grebe invasion peaked in early March on the Oswego River in Phoenix; as a result, few observers looked for April migrants. There were no concentrations of Horned or Pied-billed grebes, and Common Loon numbers were low as well. There were single reports of Cattle Egret, Glossy Ibis and Black-crowned Night-Heron and several Great Egrets, two of which spent time near a heronry in West Monroe with no evidence of breeding.

Three Trumpeter Swans were in Fair Haven on 2 March and these birds were heard calling as they flew east over Oswego Harbor. Large flocks of Snow Geese continued to move through this spring. Many flying past Derby Hill come from the southwest and are thought to have moved through Montezuma NWR, a traditional stopover. However, many more are reported from the eastern parts of

the Region where they were almost unknown as recently as 10 years ago. The handful of reports of Brant on Oneida Lake or Lake Ontario can be attributed to the lack of observers, while the generally low numbers of dabbling ducks seen may have had more to do with the weather. As is often the case with a cold early March, the dabblers don't linger once the water does open but instead move on quickly to the breeding grounds. The only waterfowl rarity was a **Tufted Duck** in Oswego in company with many scaup and White-winged Scoters. Many diving duck maxima were holdovers from winter, but Ring-necked Duck, Greater Scaup and Hooded Merganser were well reported spring migrants, while Canvasback continued to be scarce and Ruddy Duck was seen infrequently this year.

The hawk flight at Derby Hill was the best since 1995, helped by late April weather that, if not ideal, was at least not as adverse as in recent years. Four Black Vultures was a new season high, but the expansion of this species into our area continues to be very slow. There was a new season high for Turkey Vulture and good totals for Osprey, Bald Eagle, Red-tailed Hawk and Golden Eagle, but Sharp-shinned Hawk and American Kestrel numbers remain low. Other than the Black Vultures, a lone Swainson's Hawk rounded out the unusual raptors. Elsewhere, there were several reports of Northern Goshawks on territory, a Red-shouldered Hawk on territory in northern Cayuga County, where they have been rare breeders in the past, and two reports of Golden Eagles.

Sandhill Cranes are now expected along Lake Ontario, but three reports elsewhere, including a bird that remained near West Winfield for two weeks, can lead us to hope that birds are looking for breeding territory. There were few late season shorebird reports, including none from Sandy Pond, but in West Winfield large numbers of Semipalmated Plovers, along with Black-bellied Plovers and Dunlins, put down in a flooded field. Glaucous and Lesser Black-backed gulls lingered into March, as did Iceland, for which there were several May sightings as well.

A Snowy Owl in Sauquoit lingered well into April, Long-eared Owls were found in Noyes Sanctuary, one of the two Northern Saw-whet Owls reported was dead and no Short-eared Owls were noted.

The Region's first **Chuck-will's-widow** spent a week in the town of Schroepel behind Robert Fisk's house in an area that until 2001 had hosted Whip-poor-will. Robert's daughter, Kayla, thought she heard a Whip-poor-will from inside the house and when her father went out to listen, the Chuck-will's-widow was calling insistently. The bird was recorded by several observers over the next week and it was seen flying on several brief occasions, but the bird was not harassed by playing recorded calls. The Whip-poor-will population in the area has most likely been crowded out by the encroaching suburbs.

Our small Fish Crow population seems to be maintaining itself. Swallow arrivals were somewhat late, especially for Purple Martin, and there is a noticeable decline in the number of occupied houses by that species as many formerly open lakeside sites now have trees growing above the houses.

The cold weather in early April did not produce any migrant waves. As a

result, numbers of Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers, Winter Wrens, Golden-crowned Kinglets and several sparrows were reduced. Late migrants that were barely reported were Olive-sided and Yellow-bellied flycatchers, Philadelphia Vireo and Gray-cheeked Thrush, while Swainson's Thrush, Scarlet Tanager, Rose-breasted Grosbeak and Indigo Bunting were scarcely mentioned for the season.

This was the second spring that the area around the Oswego County nuclear plants, which includes the Energy Information Center grounds, was closed to public access. However, warbler waves can be found anywhere along Lake Ontario and some good numbers were seen this season. Sixteen species of warblers were reported on 1 May in Scriba and movement continued through the early part of the month, with especially fine numbers of Nashville, Yellow-rumped and Palm warblers. Later migrants such as Tennessee, Bay-breasted, Blackpoll and Canada had all arrived by 11 May but wet and chilly weather over the next week slowed the pace, or at least resulted in less observer activity. Later in May, tiny Schiller Park in Syracuse had 16 species of warblers on 25 May and seven species on 31 May. There were several reports of Orange-crowned Warblers as well as single migrant Prairie and Prothonotary warblers. The latter two species returned to breeding areas as well. There was only one report of a Cape May Warbler, Tennessee Warbler reports were very few, and both Mourning and Canada warblers were barely mentioned as migrants, although both were numerous in breeding locations by late May.

The lawns and thickets around the nuclear plants mentioned above are favored by sparrows, but the closing of the area has reduced early reports and overall numbers for species such as Chipping, Vesper and Savannah sparrows. An ice storm on 4-5 April grounded large numbers of Fox Sparrows in Oswego County, with many birds at feeders and others along the scraped roadsides. A Dickcissel spent a few days in Madison County and a Yellow-headed Blackbird put in a two hour appearance at Derby Hill.

In many years, mixed flocks of Red-winged Blackbirds, Common Grackles and Brown-headed Cowbirds are widespread in early March. This year, early March was marked by cold weather and deep snow, so it wasn't until the big warm-up on 16 March that icterids finally started to move through in large flocks. Purple Finches did show up in early March, but in this non-irruption year there were no Pine Siskins, White-winged Crossbills or redpolls and only single reports of Red Crossbill and Evening Grosbeak.

For the season, 234 species were reported, an average year without finches and shorebirds. Highlights were Cattle Egret, Glossy Ibis, Black Vulture, Trumpeter Swan, **Tufted Duck**, Swainson's Hawk, **Chuck-will's-widow**, Orange-crowned Warbler, Dickcissel and Yellow-headed Blackbird.

CONTRIBUTORS

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ABBREVIATIONS

CM – Clay Marsh; CS – Cicero Swamp; DH – Derby Hill; DL – Delta L; FH – Fair Haven, Little Sodus Bay and vicinity; LOL – L Ontario Littoral; NS – Noyes Sanctuary, New Haven; OneiL – Oneida L; OnonL – Onondaga L; SCH – T Schroepfel; SenR – Seneca Ri; SFWS – Spring Farm Wildlife Sanctuary, Kirkland; SSSP – Selkirk Shores SP; Syr – Syracuse; TRWMA – Three Rivers WMA; UM – Utica Marsh; WH – Whiskey Hollow, T Van Buren; WPd – Woodman Pd, Hamilton.

LOONS – DUCKS

Red-throated Loon: 4 Brewerton 30 Mar, only report.

Com. Loon: arr 3 OnonL 30 Mar; max 38 OnonL 2 Apr.

Pied-billed Grebe: migrants only 1-2 per day.

Horned Grebe: arr 1 Bolivar 31 Mar; max 3 per day.

Red-necked Grebe: to 20 per day Phoenix thru 15 Mar, from late winter invasion; arr UM 29 Mar; max 8 Brewerton 20 Apr.

Double-crested Cormorant: arr DH 6 Apr.

Am. Bittern: max 3 Sangerfield 17 May.

Least Bittern: arr SCH 4 May; 3 CM & WM after 17 May.

Great Blue Heron: arr 6 Fulton 11 Mar; max 20 DH 28 Mar.

Great Egret: Baldwinsville 10 Apr; 2 WM after 25 Apr.

CATTLE EGRET: 1 OnonL 13 May (YM).

Black-crowned Night-Heron: SenR 17 May.

GLOSSY IBIS: 1 Sangerfield 19-22 Apr (BB, mob).

BLACK VULTURE: 3 DH 25 Mar, before cold front; 1 DH 10 Apr; total of 4

new high.

Snow Goose: max 15,000 DL 25 Mar; 21,000 past DH 21-24 Mar; counts of 200-500 from many locations 20 Mar-9 Apr.

Brant: arr OneiL 15 May; max 150 DH 16 May; 130 Florence 30 May.

Mute Swan: max 5 FH 17 May.

Trumpeter Swan: 3 FH & 3 Oswego 2 Mar, same birds approx 1 hour apart (BP, NYSARC).

Tundra Swan: arr 1 Brewerton 1 Mar; max 19 SenR floodplain 23 Mar.

Am. Wigeon: arr Oswego 2 Mar.

Blue-winged Teal: max 9 OSWE 16 Apr.

N. Shoveler: max 10 SCH 13 Apr.

N. Pintail: max 130 SCH 23 Mar.

Green-winged Teal: max 100 W. Winfield 5 Apr.

Canvasback: max 3 WPd 10 Apr.

Redhead: max 70 FH 2 Mar.

Ring-necked Duck: max 380 SSSP 17 Mar.

Greater Scaup: max 2600 OneiL 22 Apr.

Lesser Scaup: max 30 FH 2 Mar.

TUFTED DUCK: 1 male Oswego 1-13 Mar (DW, mob).

White-winged Scoter: max 93 Oswego 19 Mar.

Long-tailed Duck: max 540 Oswego 19

Mar; 95 Toad Harbor 22 Apr; 5 WPD 4 Apr, unusual on smaller lakes.
Bufflehead: max 80 FH 2 Mar.
Com. Goldeneye: max 920 FH 2 Mar.
Hooded Merganser: max 182 SSSP 17 Mar.
Com. Merganser: max 420 OnonL 2 Apr.
Red-breasted Merganser: max 48 OnonL 2 Apr.
Ruddy Duck: arr 1 UM 29 Mar; max 7 OnonL 5 Apr; few reports.

HAWKS – ALCIDS

Osprey: first nesting birds noted 24 Mar.
N. Goshawk: on territory Highland Forest & Georgetown in Apr; 1 Jamesville 16 Mar.
Red-shouldered Hawk: ad Ira beaver swamp 25 May, unusual breeding location.
SWAINSON'S HAWK: 1 light morph DH 19 Apr.
Golden Eagle: Georgetown 7-9 Mar; Mohawk 15 Mar.
Peregrine Falcon: SFWS 14 May

Derby Hill Hawk Migration Totals

Species	Arrival	Max	Max Dat	Total
Turkey Vulture	1 Mar	1295	12 Apr	8559
Osprey	24 Mar	38	1 May	435
Bald Eagle	1 Mar	20	20 Apr	201
Northern Harrier	8 Mar	59	28 Mar	552
Sharp-shinned Hawk	5 Mar	347	18 Apr	3820
Cooper's Hawk	4 Mar	60	28 Mar	430
Northern Goshawk	4 Mar	7	8 Mar	58
Red-shouldered Hawk	15 Mar	149	25 Mar	721
Broad-winged Hawk	14 Apr	4384	20 Apr	19121
Red-tailed Hawk	1 Mar	1006	14 Apr	6760
Rough-legged Hawk	7 Mar	39	28 Mar	303
Golden Eagle	7 Mar	7	4 dates	75
American Kestrel	8 Mar	37	28 Mar	216
Merlin	8 Mar	4	11 May	39
Peregrine Falcon	10 May			2
Total including unidentified and rarities				41,354

Am. Coot: Phoenix 13 Mar; SCH 13 Apr; only reports.
Sandhill Crane: 4 DH 28 Mar; 2 DH 12 Apr; 1 DH 27 Apr; 2 DH 28 Apr; 1 W. Winfield 28 Mar-15 Apr; 2 SCH 25 Apr; Van Buren 14 May.
Black-bellied Plover: 2 W. Winfield 21 May, only report.
Semipalmated Plover: max 40 W.

Winfield 21 May (KZ).
Greater Yellowlegs: max 10 Lysander 5 May.
Lesser Yellowlegs: max only 3-5 per day.
Solitary Sandpiper: max 7 Sangerfield 17 May.
Spotted Sandpiper: arr SCH 16 Apr, early.
Upland Sandpiper: 4 Fulton 11 May; 2

SCH 27 Apr.

Least Sandpiper: arr SCH 16 Apr, early.

Pectoral Sandpiper: max 18 TRWMA 26 Apr.

Dunlin: max 4 W. Winfield 21 May.

Wilson's Snipe: max 43 SCH 30 Mar.

Bonaparte's Gull: arr 4 DH 2 Apr; 2 WPd 4 Apr; max 12 OnonL 25 Apr.

Iceland Gull: 3 SenR Liverpool 1 Mar; late were 1 Phoenix 11 May, 1 SSSP 13 May & 1 OnonL 14 May.

Lesser Black-backed Gull: SenR Liverpool 4, 9 Mar.

Glaucous Gull: SenR Liverpool 7 Mar.

Caspian Tern: arr DH 7 Apr; max 36 FH 16 May.

Black Tern: arr OnonL 8 May.

DOVES – WOODPECKERS

Black-billed Cuckoo: arr 2 May, early, but scarce until 24 May.

Yellow-billed Cuckoo: arr CM & TRWMA 17 May; max 3 SFWS 27 May; 4 other reports.

Snowy Owl: 1-2 Fenner to 7 Mar; Sauquoit to 12 Apr.

Long-eared Owl: max 3 NS 29 Mar; about 10 overall NS 24 Mar-18 Apr.

N. Saw-whet Owl: Cato 27 May; dead SFWS 4 Mar.

Com. Nighthawk: max 3 DH 27 May; 3 other reports.

CHUCK-WILL'S-WIDOW: SCH 20-28 May (KF, RF, mob, NYSARC), first Reg record.

Whip-poor-will: arr 3 Constantia 10 May; max 7 Constantia 17 May.

Ruby-throated Hummingbird: max 25 DH 11 May.

Belted Kingfisher: max 7 DH 15 Apr.

Red-headed Woodpecker: on territory CS 10 May; Ira 18 May; New Haven in beaver floodland 29 May; migrant Pompey 10 May; 1 DH after 16 May.

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: max 2 per day.

N. Flicker: 3 Knoxboro 8 Mar, hardy winterers; max 239 DH 15 Apr.

FLYCATCHERS – WAXWINGS

Olive-sided Flycatcher: 2 DL area after 26 May.

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher: only 3 reports.

Acadian Flycatcher: arr WH 17 May.

Alder Flycatcher: max 2 per day.

Willow Flycatcher: max 4 CM 27 May.

Least Flycatcher: max 7 WM 17 May.

Great Crested Flycatcher: max 25 central OSWE 17 May.

E. Kingbird: max 40 DH 11 May.

N. Shrike: 1 MADI 7 Mar; singles New Haven & Mexico 13 Mar, still on winter territory; last 13 Apr.

Yellow-throated Vireo: max 9 FH 17 May.

Blue-headed Vireo: migrants only 1-2 per day.

Warbling Vireo: max 9 CM 17 May.

Philadelphia Vireo: LOL 17 May; Syr 26 May.

Red-eyed Vireo: max 16 WH 28 May.

Blue Jay: first migrants DH 28 Apr.

Am. Crow: max 6950 DH 16 Mar.

Fish Crow: 2-4 Shop City Syr thru; 2 Syr Univ 17 Apr; max 7 Liverpool 6 May.

Com. Raven: courtship Fabius & Parish early Mar; pair on territory near DH in Apr.

Horned Lark: max 500 SCH 8 Apr, put down by snowfall.

Purple Martin: arr 21 Apr, late; number of inhabited houses on decrease.

Bank Swallow: 265 fresh nest holes WM sand pit 11 May.

Winter Wren: arr 19 Apr, late; max 2 per day.

Sedge Wren: 3 WM 17 May, did not persist.

Marsh Wren: max 30 CM 17 May.

Golden-crowned Kinglet: max 20 LOL 26 Apr.

Ruby-crowned Kinglet: max 60 DH 8 May.

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher: max 6 CS 5 May.

E. Bluebird: max 6 per day DH.

Veery: max 8 CM 17 May.
Swainson's Thrush: max 2 per day thru May.
Gray-cheeked Thrush: Scriba 11 May, only report
Hermit Thrush: max 12 NS 21 Apr.
Wood Thrush: max 28 CM 17 May.
Gray Catbird: max 46 CM 17 May.
N. Mockingbird: migrant over Georgetown 15 Apr.
Brown Thrasher: max 6 LOL 3 May.
Am. Pipit: arr 4 DH 15 Mar; max 70 DH 27 Mar; last 17 May.
Cedar Waxwing: max 181 Pompey 1 Apr.

WARBLERS

Blue-winged Warbler: arr Scriba 1 May; max 6 Baltimore Woods 6 May.
Golden-winged Warbler: arr Scriba 1 May.
Tennessee Warbler: max 1-2 per day; few reports.
Orange-crowned Warbler: LOL 5, 6 May; Clinton 11 May.
Nashville Warbler: max 50+ Scriba 7 May.
N. Parula: max 3-5 per day LOL 1-8 May.
Yellow Warbler: max 250 DH 11 May.
Chestnut-sided Warbler: max 5 per day.
Magnolia Warbler: max 9 Schiller P 25 May.
Cape May Warbler: Scriba 1 May, only report.
Black-throated Blue Warbler: max 2-3 per day.
Yellow-rumped Warbler: arr DH 27 Mar; 200-300 per day LOL 1-4 May; max 350 DH 11 May.
Black-throated Green Warbler: arr Georgetown 20 Apr, early; max 20 Scriba 1 May.
Blackburnian Warbler: max 4 Schiller P 25 May.
Pine Warbler: max 6 LOL 27 Apr.
Prairie Warbler: arr Scriba 5 May; return to Dewitt 9 May.

Palm Warbler: max 75 DH 4 May.
Bay-breasted Warbler: max 3 Schiller P 25 May.
Blackpoll Warbler: max 8 SFWS 23 May.
Cerulean Warbler: arr 4 Howland 1 WMA 3 May; 3 Scriba 7 May, good migrant count.
Black-and-white Warbler: max 6 DH 1 May.
Am. Redstart: max 11 Cicero 20 May.
Prothonotary Warbler: Scriba 1 May (MV), only 2nd report from LOL; up to 3 singing males Three Mile Bay WMA after 12 May.
Ovenbird: max 11 WH 21 May.
N. Waterthrush: max 9 CS 9 May.
Louisiana Waterthrush: arr Pompey 15 Apr.
Mourning Warbler: migrants 1 per day.
Com. Yellowthroat: max 58 CM 17 May.
Hooded Warbler: arr WH 7 May.
Wilson's Warbler: max 15 DH 27 May.
Canada Warbler: migrants 1 per day.

TANAGERS – WEAVERS

Scarlet Tanager: max 6 WM 17 May.
E. Towhee: max 6 Ram's Gulch Dewitt 21 May.
Am. Tree Sparrow: max 50 Williamstown 8 Apr; last DH & Williamstown 19 Apr.
Chipping Sparrow: max 28 Clay 17 May.
Clay-colored Sparrow: DH 8-13 May.
Field Sparrow: arr TRWMA 30 Mar.
Vesper Sparrow: arr 1 Van Buren 16 Apr, usually arr early Apr.
Grasshopper Sparrow: arr 2 Richland 10 May.
Fox Sparrow: arr Utica 18 Mar; max 40 one site Parish 1 Apr; 90 central OSWE 5 Apr after ice storm; 22 Durhamville 7 Apr; last 17 Apr.
Song Sparrow: max 59 Clay 17 May.
Lincoln's Sparrow: 1-3 per day LOL 1-27 May.
Swamp Sparrow: max 46 CM 17 May.
White-throated Sparrow: max 35

Mexico 8 May.

White-crowned Sparrow: max 45 DH 7 May.

Dark-eyed Junco: max 90 WM 30 Mar.

Lapland Longspur: max 10 Chittenango 13 Apr; 1 Fabius 8 Mar; 3 DH 24 Mar; 3 SCH 8 Apr.

Snow Bunting: max 80 Fabius 7 Mar; last DH 15 Mar.

Rose-breasted Grosbeak: max 15 DH 11 May.

Indigo Bunting: max 6 DH 18 May.

DICKCISSEL: Stockbridge 12-13 May (BB).

Bobolink: max 250 DH 11 May.

E. Meadowlark: arr DH 16 Mar; max 30 DH 28 Mar.

YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD:

male DH 26 Apr (GP, mob).

Rusty Blackbird: max 116 CM 28 Apr.

blackbird sp.: peak DH flight 160,000 25 Mar.

Orchard Oriole: Clay after 17 May; Cross L 18 May.

Baltimore Oriole: max 190 DH 11 May.

Purple Finch: arr widespread 5-7 Mar.

House Finch: max 60 migrants DH 16 Mar.

Red Crossbill: MADI 17 May (Jeanne Ryan).

Am. Goldfinch: max 600 DH 11 May.

Evening Grosbeak: 1 Georgetown 4 May, only report.